

TESTIMONY ON SB 2362
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
Monday, March 17, 2025
By: Kirsten Baesler, State Superintendent
701-328-4570

Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee,

For the record, my name is Kirsten Baesler, and I serve as the Superintendent of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in **full support** of SB 2362, as amended, regarding the accreditation of schools.

I appreciate the thoughtful collaboration that has gone into refining this legislation. With the amendments now incorporated, this bill strikes the right balance between maintaining a **state-provided accreditation option at no cost to school districts** and ensuring schools have the flexibility to choose from an approved list of accreditation agencies that best meet their needs.

As amended, the bill:

- **Ensures that school districts have access to a state-funded accreditation option** through a contract secured by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, ensuring no financial barriers for districts.
- **Allows school districts to select an alternative accreditation agency from a state-approved list**, while requiring districts that opt for an alternative to cover

the associated costs. This approach mirrors the successful interim assessment model passed by the Legislature last session.

- **Maintains the authority of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to oversee the accreditation process** while incorporating meaningful input from educational stakeholders.

I greatly appreciate the committee's work in shaping this bill into a **strong, student-centered policy that supports our schools while preserving local flexibility.**

With that in mind, I respectfully request that the committee **consider moving this bill forward as is with no changes as quickly as possible** so it can get to the Governor's desk for signing. This will allow us to immediately begin working with our educational stakeholder partners to establish the approved accreditation list, ensuring that:

1. I can see this initiative through to completion, rather than leaving it as unfinished business for my successor.
2. School districts have the time they need to make accreditation decisions for the 2025-2026 school year.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate your support for this important work, and I urge a **“do-pass”** recommendation.

Kirsten Baesler

State Superintendent

North Dakota Department of Public Instruction